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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2017

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SUBJECT: Human Rights: Guo Feixiong Receives Fine and Jail Time; Appeal Possible

Ref: Guangzhou 962

11. (U) Classified by Consul General Robert Goldberg for reason 1.4 (d).

12. (C) The trial of democracy activist Guo Feixiong ended November 14 with a conviction for "illegal business practices," resulting in a sentence of five years in prison and a fine of CNY 40,000 (approximately USD 5,387). Because Guo has ten days from the date of the ruling to decide whether to file an appeal, the Tianhe District Court has not yet announced where Guo will serve his sentence.

13. (C) Guo's wife, Zhang Qing, told a consulate political assistant that she and Guo's lawyers originally had been optimistic when the July 9 trial had ended in a ten-week recess to allow the prosecutor to develop additional evidence. (NOTE: The ten-week recess should have expired in late September. END NOTE) Zhang says she now believes that the court further delayed Guo's conviction and sentencing to avoid drawing international attention to China's human rights situation until after the Seventeenth National Party Congress.

14. (C) Zhang said she hoped to convince her husband to appeal his case, and that Guo's lawyers would discuss this option when they meet with him this week. Zhang also plans to continue to write open letters to influential individuals and groups to raise public awareness of her husband's case. (NOTE: As reported reftel, Zhang penned an open letter to Hu Jintao in August. END NOTE) She said that two websites -- Boxun.com and rfa.org -- had agreed to publish any forthcoming letters.

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